



PRESS RELEASE

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For Immediate Release

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Annapolis, Maryland—

Careless smoking has been the cause of 3 building fires and one fatal dwelling fire in the last three weeks in Annapolis. These fires have caused a total property loss of (\$750,000.00?). Tragedies such as these don't have to happen. Careless smoking (cigarettes, cigars, pipes, etc) is the leading cause of death both in Maryland and nationally, and the third leading cause of fire injuries in the United States. Roughly one of every four fire deaths in 1999 was attributed to smoking materials.

According to National data (NFPA), in 1999, there were 167,000 fires associated with smoking materials, resulting in 807 deaths, 2,193 injuries and \$559.1 million in property damage. Of the fire deaths, 776 occurred in residential properties.

The most common material first ignited in residential smoking material-related fires was mattresses and bedding, followed by trash and upholstered furniture.

Here are some

CARELESS SMOKING LIFE-SAVING TIPS

from NFPA (National Fire Protection Association):

- Keep smoking materials away from anything that can burn (ie. Mattresses, bedding, upholstered furniture, draperies, etc).
- Never smoke in bed or when you are drowsy, intoxicated or medicated.
- Use large, deep, non-tip ashtrays on sofas or chairs.

- **Completely douse butts and ashes with water before throwing them away as they can smolder in the trash and cause a fire.**
- **Whenever someone has been smoking in the home, always check on, between and under upholstery and cushions and inside trash cans for butts that may be smoldering.**
- **When smokers visit your home, ask them to keep smoking materials, lighters and matches with them so young children do not touch them.**
- **Keep matches and lighters up high, out of children's sight and reach (preferably in a locked cabinet).**

Keep in mind that children are one of the highest risk groups for deaths in residential fires. At home, children usually play with fire, using matches and lighters, in hidden places like bedrooms, closets and under beds. These “secret places” have a lot of things that can catch fire easily. You can also check these areas for ashes, burnt matches, lighters or charred materials if you think your child may be playing with fire, as well as the bathroom, kitchen sink and trash areas.

Keep in mind that children of all ages set over 100,000 fires each year and that it is normal for children to be curious about fires but it is not normal to play with fire. 85 out of 100 lives lost are due to a child set fire.